



Florida House of Representatives

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Florida House Passes State Budget Recommendations, Keeps Government Living Within Its Means, Keeps Taxes Low

Tallahassee, Fla.—Florida House Majority Leader Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami) today commented on the Florida House of Representatives passing the House recommended budget for FY 2011-2012 as well as numerous conforming and implementing bills.

"Today represents an important step in creating a fiscally sound budget for our state," said Leader Lopez-Cantera. "The voters of Florida spoke loudly in November, calling on all levels of government to live within their means. These trying economic times have forced Florida's families to tighten their belts and make tough sacrifices. Government is not exempt from these challenging choices, so we must do the same.

"Unfortunately, many Members of the Democratic Caucus heeded the advice of the Minority Leader and were not willing to make the difficult decisions necessary to balance our budget without raising taxes. We are thankful that our Republican Members participated in and remained committed to fulfilling our constitutional responsibility. We made strategic cuts and utilized limited taxpayer funds to prioritize people over things and to ensure the safety and security of Floridians," continued Leader Lopez-Cantera.

Regulatory Reduction

"The House proposed a thoughtful budget to responsibly constrain spending and limit the scope of government. We streamlined and reduced burdensome regulations on many of our businesses and removed regulations on some of Florida's professions to promote economic activity in the private sector and reward American entrepreneurship," stated Leader Lopez-Cantera.

The Florida House today passed CS/HB 5005 and CS/HB 5007, legislation that aims to deregulate and streamline business in the State of Florida. The first measure, CS/HB 5005, deregulates certain professions and occupations, while the second bill, CS/HB 5007, reduces and streamlines current regulation. In total, reducing the burden of regulation and licensure on

certain businesses and professions the private sector will generate a private-sector cost savings of more than \$11 million.

Florida Retirement System

"The House budget makes modest changes to our state's growing retirement system to address the current \$4.6 billion budget shortfall and to ensure the future sustainability of the program," noted Leader Lopez-Cantera. "It was our goal to ensure that current employees will receive the benefits they have earned and that future benefits are awarded fairly and in a manner that offers long-term viability and is fiscally sound."

The Florida House passed a reasonable adjustment to state employee benefits needed to avoid massive layoffs, pay cuts, and other detrimental actions that would adversely affect public workers. CS/HB 1405 includes a 3 percent employee contribution, raises the retirement age from 62 to 65 for new employees based on the longevity of the newer workforce, and eliminates the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) program for new enrollees.

State Economic Enhancement and Development (SEED) Fund

"The Florida House also created an innovative and flexible trust fund to promote job creation in Florida. The State Economic Enhancement and Development (SEED) Fund provides a dedicated, recurring funding source to enable Florida to be proactive and equipped to capitalize on opportunities that will benefit the state in economic development," said Leader Lopez-Cantera.

House Bill 7205 would create the State Economic Enhancement and Development (SEED) Trust Fund. The fund would serve as a depository of a portion of rental car surcharges, documentary stamp tax proceeds, and local matching funds and would provide a single source of funding for state transportation-related and housing infrastructure and job creation programs and projects.

"By constraining spending, keeping taxes low, and reducing regulations, we are working to empowers private sector job creation," concluded Leader Lopez-Cantera. "We look forward to working with the Senate in the budget conference process to produce an equally responsible and pro-jobs state budget."

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